

Appl. No. : 09/846,777
Filed : May 1, 2001

REMARKS

As a result of the amendments listed above, Claims 1-19 are pending. Claims 20-68 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1-5, 15, and 17-19 have been amended. Support for the amendments is found in the specification and claims as filed. The changes to the amended claims are shown on a separate set of pages attached hereto and entitled VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE, which follows the signature page of this Amendment.

Rejection under 35 USC § 112

Claims 15, 17, 18, and 19 have been rejected under 35 USC 112, ¶2 as lacking antecedent basis. These claims have been amended to depend from claims that provide proper antecedent basis. Applicant therefore requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejection under 35 USC § 102(b)

Claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 USC § 102, as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,146,747 to Wang et al. ("Wang et al."). "A rejection for anticipation under section 102 requires that each and every limitation of the claimed invention be disclosed in a single prior art reference." *See, e.g., In re Paulsen*, 31 U.S.P.Q.2d 1671 (Fed. Cir. 1994). Wang et al. does not disclose every element of Applicant's pending claims, and therefore cannot be considered as an anticipating reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Applicant has amended the sole pending independent claim, Claim 1, to recite a membrane mesh "wherein the pores of at least the first surface or the second surface have an average pore diameter greater than about 50 μm ." Wang et al. does not disclose a membrane mesh with first or second surface pores having an average pore diameter of greater than about 50 μm . Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the anticipation rejection of Claims 1-19 be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

The Applicant has endeavored to address all of the Examiner's concerns as expressed in the outstanding Office Action. Any claim amendments which are not specifically discussed in the above remarks are made in order to improve the clarity of claim language, to correct grammatical mistakes or ambiguities, and to otherwise improve the capacity of the claims to particularly and distinctly point out the invention to those of skill in the art. In light of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested. If the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to the prompt allowance of these claims that could be clarified with a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate the same with the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 2 Dec 2002

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Deleted text is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~**boldface**. Added text is indicated by **underlined boldface**.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Amended) A polymer membrane mesh, the membrane mesh comprising a first surface having first surface pores, a second surface having second surface pores, and a support structure between the first surface and the second surface, the support structure having a reticular network of flow channels connecting the pores of the first surface with the pores of the second surface, wherein ~~both or either the pores of~~ **at least** the first surface ~~pores and or~~ the second surface ~~pores~~ have an average pore diameter of greater than ~~or equal to~~ about **10-50** μm .

2. (Amended) The membrane of Claim 1, wherein the average pore diameter of **the pores of** at least the first surface ~~pores~~ or the second surface ~~pores ranges from~~ **is** greater than about **20-60** μm .

3. (Amended) The membrane of Claim 1, wherein the average pore diameter of **the pores of** at least the first surface ~~pores and or~~ the second surface ~~pores ranges~~ **is** from **greater than** about **10-50** μm to about 200 μm .

4. (Amended) The membrane of Claim 3, wherein the average pore diameter of **the pores of** at least the first surface ~~pores~~ or the second surface ~~pores ranges~~ **is** from about **20-60** μm to about 150 μm .

5. (Amended) The membrane of Claim 4, wherein the average pore diameter of **the pores of** at least the first surface ~~pores~~ or the second surface ~~pores ranges~~ **is** from about **30-70** μm to about 100 μm .

15. (Amended) The membrane of Claim ~~11-14~~, wherein the polyolefin is selected from the group consisting of polyethylene and polypropylene.

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17. (Amended) The membrane of Claim ~~13~~16, wherein the hydrophilic component is selected from the group consisting of polyvinylpyrrolidone, polyethylene glycol, polyvinylacetate and mixtures thereof.

18. (Amended) The membrane of Claim ~~13~~16, having a weight ratio of polymer to hydrophilic component from about 1:20 to about 20:1.

19. (Amended) The membrane of Claim ~~15~~18, wherein the weight ratio is ~~ranges~~ from about 1:10 to about 10:1.

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